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ABSTRACT

Continuing education for women has become a significant component of out educational system, as evidenced by the estimated over 500 continuing education courses, services, and programs for adult women offered throughout the country. Past emphasis of these programs had been in assisting housewives interested in job-entry or re-entry and/or searching for personal identity and fulfillment. New programs now being devised include emphasis on: helping employed women with career development or advancement to managerial positions; linking undergraduate women and community groups; promoting child care facilities; experimenting with new methods of helping low-income women. Consortium arrangements are being made among some colleges and universities to extend the benefits of programs for women beyond the scope of a single institution or location. A study by the National Coalition for Research on Women's Education and Development to assess the impact of women's programs on participants as well as institutions and a national survey by Educational Testing Service to determine women's needs and identify program gaps will help in providing needed research. The value of continuing education programs to improved counseling of undergraduate women and the influence of continuing education for the women's movement on the total continuing education movement warrant further study. (EA)

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR WOMEN:

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

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This publication is based on a paper presented at a convention workshop cosponsored by the Commission on the Status of Women in Adult Education and the Section on Continuing Education for Women—both part of the Adult Education Association—in Dallas, Texas, October 31, 1973. It was prepared by Jean A. Wells, Special Assistant to the Director of the Women's Bureau.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR WOMEN: CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

The continuing education for women movement has now been in existence for over 10 years. It started in the early sixties when a handful of courses were tailored and scheduled to meet the special educational needs of mature women. The proliferation of courses, programs, and centers since then qualifies continuing education for women as a significant component of our educational system, with increasing acceptance around the country.

Although there is no up-to-date and comprehensive count of continuing education courses, services, and programs for adult women, the number is estimated to exceed 500. Partial compilations were made when the Women's Bureau collected readily available information from educators for listing in editions of its publication "Continuing Education Programs and Services for Women."[1] The number of offerings reported rose from around 100 in 1966 to almost 450 in 1971. A more cursory review had identified about 20 offerings in 1963.

Frequent requests to the Women's Bureau for background information to aid in the establishment of new programs support the view that the number of special programs for women continues to rise. Reports also indicate that mature women students are being welcomed more warmly now than previously on college campuses, including those where no special program is provided them.

REASONS FOR THE STEADY EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS

Several factors help explain the gaining momentum of the continuing education for women movement. Most important are the strong interests and wishes of mature women themselves. Many who are homemakers have a yearning, as their children enter school or leave home, to seek new meaningful activities, often as part of the work force. But too often these women find that close confinement to home and family has sapped their self-confidence in working outside the home. As reinforcement they seek courses that help strengthen their personal identity, present options for fulfilling individual potential, and provide useful job preparation.

Skill courses and education degrees have helped many to qualify for entry or reentry into the job market. As of October 1973 there were about 25.5 million women workers 25 years of age and over. Women workers in this age group had approximated 14 million in 1950 and 18.6 million in 1960. Their 39-percent gain between 1960 and 1973 compares with an 8-percent increase for men of the same age.

Note.—Footnotes are listed on page 13.

Another force propelling more adult women into both the classroom and work force is the Nation's declining birth rate. Concern lest overpopulation deplete our natural resources and spoil our environment has caused more couples to limit the size of their families and has provided more wives with time to devote to alternative activities outside the home. Other factors supporting the trend are the liberalization of abortion laws, higher standards and cost of living, and the women's rights movement.

A measure of the impact of these factors on the school enrollment of adult women is now available from surveys made by the Bureau of the Census of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Although previous enrollment counts of that agency had been restricted to persons under 35 years of age because of the scarcity of older students, changing circumstances have stimulated extension of coverage to include students 35 years and over.[2] Following are the enrollment figures available for women in the regular public and private school system, which includes elementary, high school and college.

	Number of women students		
Year	Total, 25 years and over	25-34 years	35 years and over
1950	*	47,000	*
1960	*	171,000	*
1972	1,102,000	627,000	475,000

*Not available.

The more than three-fold gain registered between 1960 and 1972 by women students 25 to 34 years old probably was exceeded by women 35 years and older. Going back to school is an even more unusual phenomenon for the latter group since so few mature women thought of this possibility even a decade ago.

In addition to the growing pressure from mature women for educational programs designed or scheduled to suit their needs, there has been responsive interest on the part of several groups—colleges, universities, voluntary organizations, and others—in developing such programs. Experience with mature women as students has shown educators how serious and well-motivated these women are. In addition, many educational institutions are experiencing or anticipating a drop in the enrollment of young students. Consequently, the thought of filling empty classroom space with mature women students has become increasingly appealing.

Reinforced by requests from both mature women and educators, several professional associations, in addition to the Adult Education Association (AEA), have been scheduling convention workshops in order to discuss and encourage development of continuing education programs for women. Two of these are the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Another, the National University Extension Association, has not only formed a Continuing Education for Women Section but has also sponsored an award to give recognition to outstanding programs or services established in behalf of adult women.

The varied extent to which such programs have been developed on college campuses was clearly evident at a series of conferences on "Career Counseling and Continuing Education for Women." The series was conducted in the fall of 1973 to promote interest in continuing education for women at colleges and

universities in Maryland. Some administrators reported that no program of this type existed on their campus but promised to give the matter serious consideration. Others, however, described a variety of ongoing offerings, enthusiastically received by mature women.

Innovative efforts are underway in Texas to develop a statewide program of continuing education for women, with financial support from the State legislature. If the plan is approved, it would foster cooperative efforts among the State's colleges and universities to provide needed continuing education activities for women. Regional councils would be set up to see that duplications of effort and programs would be kept to a minimum. Funds provided by the State are to act as incentives to the institutions of higher education to establish programs of continuing education and community services, loans and scholarships for part-time students, child development services, job counseling, and related research.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY PROGRAMS

In the early sixties special educational offerings developed for women were designed to overcome widespread obstacles restricting women's educational opportunities. The programs varied considerably, depending on such factors as the expressed needs of the mature women in the area, the special talents of interested faculty members or concerned community leaders, or the demands of the local labor market. Generally speaking, the so-called continuing education programs for women had one or more of the following features:

- Strong emphasis on education and job counseling
- Individual assessment and counseling
- Group orientation and support
- Information about opportunities for training and employment
- Liberal provision for transfer of credits
- Flexible scheduling of courses at convenient hours
- Enrollment on a part-time basis
- Limited course loads
- Course content and methodology oriented for adults
- Financial assistance, especially for part-time study
- Provision of job leads or referral services

The combinations of content features listed above have resulted in several major types of structured programs. Chiefly these are: comprehensive programs (covering many of the basic features named above); general orientation courses (providing an overview of educational, employment, and volunteer opportunities along with some counseling); study toward completion of a baccalaureate degree (assisting former dropouts); part-time programs in graduate education; retraining programs in specific professional fields; courses leading to semiprofessional work; and programs with innovative curriculum or educational practices.

NEW PROGRAM EMPHASES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Several new developments and changes in program emphasis are emerging as the educational institutions and other organizations with "older" programs or courses continue to respond to the needs of their clientele. Probably most noteworthy is that continuing education programs and centers are exerting more effort toward meeting the special needs of particular groups of women. Past emphasis had been on assisting housewives interested in entering or reentering the work force, or in searching for personal identity and fulfillment, or both.[3] Some new courses are now being devised to help employed women with their career

development or advancement to managerial positions. Other programs are seeking linkages with undergraduate women and community groups, promoting development of child care facilities, or experimenting with new methods of reaching out and helping low-income women.

Other changes reveal commitment on the part of directors and leaders of continuing education programs to advance such related concerns as women's studies programs, women's resource centers, and women's caucuses and committees formed to expand equal education and employment opportunity on campus.

Examples of new departures or further refinement of earlier innovations follow.

Career Development for Employed Women: Interest has been mounting on the part of employed women in learning new skills or knowledge that will enable them to change jobs or improve their chances for advancement. In response, several continuing education centers have devised pertinent new courses. At George Washington University in Washington, D.C., a basic course aimed at developing new horizons for housewives has been adapted with the title "Career Development for Employed Women." The continuing education division of the University of Missouri in Kansas City has worked with the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in building upward mobility courses for employees who wish to investigate avenues for personal and career growth.

Also, a training film titled "Women: Up the Career Ladder," which may be purchased from University of California Extension at Los Angeles, has been prepared both for women seeking to develop careers and for administrators implementing affirmative action programs.

Women in Management and Supervision: Courses designed to help women qualify for first-line supervisory, managerial, or administrative positions are gaining in number as more middle- and top-level opportunities are opening up to women, stimulated largely by equal employment opportunity legislation. Such courses have been available for some time at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas; Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.; and the University of California at Los Angeles.

Courses of this type developed more recently include "Administrative Supervision for Women" at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa; "The Institute for the Career Development of Women in Management" at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York; and courses offered by Hartford College in Connecticut and University of California Extension in Irvine.

A series of seminars, "Women in Management," was recently designed at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Also a series of courses titled "The Woman Supervisor," "The Woman Manager," and "Executive Challenge: The Woman Administrator" is provided at the University of Missouri in Kansas City.

For women who have had some executive experience, a 1-year internship in academic administration is fairly new at Claremont College in Claremont, California.

Efforts To Reach Youth: When continuing education courses and programs were first developed for mature women, it was anticipated that they would cause rethinking of and revisions in the education of young women and girls. It was reasoned that the errors of omission and commission that had left many mature women with inadequate skills and unrealistic preparation for their changing life pattern might be identified and remedied for the young. But despite good intentions, relatively little action in this regard was taken in the past. Continuing education directors had their time preempted by the immediate demands of establishing and operating new programs. Now, however, when some of the early programs have reached a

more advanced stage of development and some financial pressures have been relieved, there is more time to devote to strengthening ties with and services for undergraduates.

Some of the concepts and techniques used in counseling mature women are now adapted in counseling undergraduate women. For example, a counseling course in career exploration is offered to women at California State University in San Diego.[4] At Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, mature women are being brought together with undergraduate women in structured contacts that give the undergraduates insights into the experiences of the mature women. Discussed are the older women's explorations in personal assessment, their research and decisions relating to career planning and choice, and their enlightening experiences in the world of work. The younger students have provided helpful information about curriculum and campus offerings for those returning to school. Net results reported have been improved counseling of undergraduate women and a humanizing influence on the educational institution.

The program "Challenge to Attempt" has been developed for undergraduate women by the Center of Continuing Education for Women and Men of the University of Texas at Austin. Focusing on information about career choices, it has enlisted staff assistance from various graduate departments of the university.

Somewhat more informal contacts have been initiated at the University of Michigan, where the Center for Continuing Education of Women has assisted in arranging residence programs at which undergraduate women and their resident advisors exchange information with the center's older students.

Considerably different from these programs is the innovative program "WOW-Careers for Peers," developed by the voluntary organization Washington Opportunities for Women (WOW) at three high schools in the Washington, D.C., area. WOW is utilizing the counseling techniques learned from working with mature women in the training of 36 high school girls. Classified as interns, the girls are working with school guidance personnel in providing their peers with information about counseling resources, skill development, and jobhunting techniques. The interns are now receiving school credits and paid scholarships for their work.

Courses and workshops which provide counseling education in somewhat more traditional fashion are also being scheduled by some colleges and universities. Examples are the course "Career Counseling for Girls" available at George Washington University and the workshop "Facilitating Career Development for Girls and Women," offered by Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, for counselors and career guidance specialists.

A free career counseling service to help adults in Rhode Island assess their capabilities and learn about educational and training opportunities has been developed by the nonprofit research group, Career Education Project. Considered to be the only one of its kind in the country, it provides all counseling by telephone, although reference materials may be examined at its Providence office.

Women's Studies, Centers, and Caucuses: The rapid development of women's studies to the point where over 2,000 courses and 80 programs are now being offered in over 600 schools is indeed phenomenal. Some directors and educators associated with continuing education programs have been involved with this activity, sometimes providing primary or major leadership and often, active encouragement. Such cooperation is understandable since those in both "movements" want women to learn more about themselves and their history as an aid in helping them aspire to their full potential.

Illustrative of this kind of activity pioneered by a continuing education center is the interdisciplinary degree program leading to a master's degree in women's studies at George Washington University. It is designed to prepare students for professional careers in counseling, teaching, administration, or research work. Other colleges and universities at which women's studies programs have been aided by women's continuing education staff include Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York; University of Missouri at Kansas City; and University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

The strong interest in women's studies among continuing education directors has been further demonstrated in AEA's Continuing Education for Women Section workshop "Minicourse in Women's Studies: What's A Man To Do?" at the 1973 conference.

Similarly, continuing education for women personnel sometimes assist with the development of women's centers, established primarily for collecting and disseminating information about the women's movement. Involved in this joint concern are, for example, the continuing education center at the University of Michigan and the Radcliffe Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Also, in the fall of 1973 the Continuum Center at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, demonstrated its interest by sponsoring a conference on "The Multi-Faceted Women's Center."

Allied activities of other continuing education centers include participation in the organization of women's caucuses and committees, aimed at raising women's employment and educational status on campus.

Design for Self-Guidance: An experimental approach is being tested by Catalyst, Inc., a private, nonprofit organization, to learn whether college-educated family women interested in part-time employment can, with limited outside assistance, select a career field compatible with their individual circumstances and talents.

Participation in the project involves payment of a nominal fee and completion of a résumé form necessitating self-study of one's family responsibilities, education, work experience, talents, and primary interests. Enrollees then receive for study a vocational kit with booklets on planning for work or study and others describing education and career opportunities. They are also provided some counseling assistance at an affiliated college referral center and are listed on a computerized roster of employable women. Evaluation of the demonstration project may well be influenced by the availability of job opportunities in the labor market during the period reviewed.

Child Care Facilities: The possibilities for extending continuing education opportunities to mothers of young children often depend on the availability of child care facilities while the mothers attend classes. A few educational institutions have established such facilities and the number is slowly increasing. A recent survey reported in "Children on Campus"[5] revealed that 1 out of 4 colleges operate some type of pre-kindergarten program for children. Counted in the survey were day care centers, nursery schools, laboratory schools, and combination-type programs.

Programs for Community Action: With the intensified desire of women to understand the forces shaping today's society and to play a role in effecting social change, women's continuing education centers are seeking ways to assist them. At Sarah Lawrence College a special seminar "Women Organizing Women" combines undergraduates, graduate students, and women from the Center for Continuing Education in a unique program fusing theory and practice. Following a period of reading, writing, and theorizing about organizations and political lobbies, the women participate in projects intended to create social change for women. Problems encountered in the fieldwork are shared with the other seminar students.

Another type of action is the community outreach of Miami-Dade (Florida) Community College's Center for the Continuing Education of Women. Low-income women of minority races are being helped to improve their status through a Learning Skills Program and a Homeowners Workshop offered in the neighborhoods where the women live.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL GROUPS

Since responsiveness to the needs of their constituency has been a strong characteristic of continuing education programs for women, numerous courses have been arranged for specific groups of women. Illustrative of these groups are low-income women, single women, women offenders, union women, and wives of executives.

Low-Income Women: In recent years various educational institutions have attempted to extend the services of continuing education programs outside the sphere of the typical beneficiaries—middle-class women. Even though a relatively high percentage of low-income women have joined the work force, usually from dire necessity, it is recognized that they too can gain advantage from participating in continuing education programs and raising their employment skills. However, the failure to reach low-income women through available continuing education programs has been well documented.[6]

Scattered efforts to reach low-income women have had only limited success and have generally reinforced the awareness that educational programs and methods usually available are not adequate. In time it became evident that additional research and understanding were required if the special needs of low-income women were to be satisfied.

When Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, set up a program primarily for poor and minority women a few years ago, some of the minority women expressed strong dissatisfaction with the plans of the "experts," especially in connection with a proposal requesting additional funding for more women to enter the program. To define their own educational needs and program, the students initiated the Boston Study Group on Continuing Education for Urban Women[7] in order to determine and describe their special strengths, problems, and requirements from their own grassroots point of view. The resulting report stressed their need for the following aids and services: credit for life experience, more liberal admission policies, counseling, remedial help, financial assistance, child care services, and teachers who had participated in learning sessions aimed at improved communication with those in poverty.

Further in-depth study of the experiences of low-income women in adult education programs was carried on at New York's Brooklyn College in "Project Second Start."[8] Interviews were held with a small number of women enrolled in three special college programs and also with some of the faculty. The questions asked covered basic demographic information and elicited views and attitudes about the special programs and supplementary services, the women students' reasons for attending school, reactions of family and friends to their attendance, costs of enrollment, and future plans. The report concluded with recommendations for changes that might enable more low-income women with work and family responsibilities to return to school.

In an effort to provide a meaningful educational experience to adult women with limited background and with salaries below the poverty level, the organization Washington Opportunities for Women has developed "WOW-New Careers." This 2-year program includes on-the-job training for social service aides at two local institutions, supplemented by academic training and counseling by volunteer counselor aides. Completion of the program leads to an associate of arts degree from Federal City College and possible employment by one of the cooperating institutions.

Single Women: The advantages and disadvantages of living alone, especially for women who are newly widowed, separated, or divorced, are considered in courses offered at several universities. Discussions may cover legal, financial, domestic, and social aspects of being alone, as well as possible problems in adjusting to a new lifestyle. Examples of such courses are: "Women Alone," offered under the same title both by Oakland University and the Mini-College for Women at the University of Colorado in Boulder; "The Single Woman in a Couples' Society" at the University of Missouri in Kansas City; and "The Newly Single Woman" at George Washington University.

Women Offenders: Rising concern about the treatment and rehabilitation of women in correctional institutions has stimulated courses and workshops designed for those working with or in behalf of offenders on a paid or voluntary basis. In Washington, D.C., American University has a 15-week course on women offenders, Georgetown University has sponsored a conference on women offenders, and George Washington University offers a course "Introduction to Corrections," relating to men, women, and juveniles.

Union Women: To provide union women with background information needed for raising their status in their unions and places of work, the University of Wisconsin's center for women has assisted union women employees by conducting seminars tailored to their concerns and has provided other technical assistance.

Wives of Executives: A rather unique course has been offered by Oakland University for wives of corporation executives and managers. To aid their personal growth and interpersonal communications, the course stimulates them to consider how they feel about their particular role, analyze their problems, and share solutions.

CONSORTIUM ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Several efforts are underway to extend the benefits of continuing education programs for women beyond the scope of a single institution at a single location. Probably the most significant is the application of consortium arrangements already existing among some colleges and universities. Discussions about the value of such cooperative action have surfaced occasionally during the past decade but usually produced few results, since continuing education directors were intensely involved in developing and maintaining their individual programs.

A few signs of continuing interest in the idea do exist. The University of Washington and seven community colleges in the Puget Sound area have formed a Network to Encourage the Education and Employment of Women (NE^3W). Funded by the U.S. Office of Education, the Network is intended to facilitate mutual aid in programing, resources, and related matters. An immediate benefit will be a series of workshops sponsored by member institutions to provide staff training for developing women's programs. Also invited to attend the workshops will be staff from community colleges in other areas.

Consortium arrangements existing among 16 members of the Southern Division of the Associated Colleges of the Mid-Hudson (New York) Area are also being used in behalf of women's programs and studies. Information about course offerings is being shared to eliminate unnecessary duplications, refer students to sister institutions that offer special courses, and stimulate establishment of additional women's programs where needed.

Excellent response of Washington, D.C., women to the free services (peer counseling, career planning assistance, résumé help, jobhunting advice, and job leads) offered by Washington Opportunities for Women prompted that organization to develop an experimental "WOW-Six Cities Project." In six communities (Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Providence, Richmond, and White River Junction, New Hampshire) women's

vocational information centers are being replicated at public employment offices, with variations determined by local needs. It is hoped that good response from women and expansion of employment opportunities for them by employers will indicate the need to establish similar services in additional communities.

Continuing education courses and programs originating principally in large universities and areas are now being extended to smaller communities and other locations that have insufficient offerings. This is being done particularly through University of California Extension at Los Angeles, branches of continuing education for women centers (like those of George Washington University and the University of Wisconsin), and some voluntary organizations (like Washington Opportunities for Women).

RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND INFORMATION

Although there has probably been little disagreement about the long-range value of research and evaluation to the development of continuing education programs, these activities have usually given way to immediate day-to-day operational demands in the competition for limited staff time and funds. A few institutions (like the University of Michigan,[9] the University of Cincinnati,[10] and George Washington University[11]) have conducted surveys and reported on the characteristics and followup activities of their own graduates. The importance of research to women's education was emphasized at the 1972 Wingspread Conference in Wisconsin.[12]

The absence of broad in-depth analysis and evaluation to determine the net impact of continuing education for women has long been a concern to many. Two studies now being discussed give promise of more extensive and substantive reports that may help fill the gap, as noted below.

National Coalition for Research: A comprehensive proposal has been developed by the National Coalition for Research on Women's Education and Development to assess the impact of continuing education programs for women on both the women participants and institutions of higher education. By means of questionnaires and interviews, the following information is to be obtained and analyzed for a representative group of institutional programs: structure, clientele, impact on institutional policy, visible social consequences, and implications to educational change for women of all ages.*

Women's Action Program: An exploratory contract was approved several years ago by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for the Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey, to produce a sample design for a national survey of continuing education programs for women. The proposal focuses on the development of a mail questionnaire directed at mature women to determine their needs and identify outstanding gaps in available programs. Also included are a survey of institutions and a review of pertinent literature.**

Educational Testing Service: An intensive resident course to aid educators and educational decisionmakers in "Assessment and Evaluation in Continuing Education" has been developed and is offered at the ETS Conference Center. The purpose of the course is to increase the ability to analyze programs and complex

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*Announcement was made in December 1973 that initial funding of the proposal by the Carnegie Corporation of New York had been cleared and the study approved, with a completion goal of summer 1975. The Coalition president is Elizabeth Cless, Director of Claremont College's Center for Continuing Education in Claremont, California.

**The design report was received in November 1973 by the National Center of Education Statistics in the Office of Education and is being reviewed and considered for possible funding.

problem situations, plan for the collection and evaluation of pertinent data, and develop reasonable action plans. Utilization of the various exercises and techniques suggested in the courses and followup contacts may help directors of continuing education programs in pursuing plans to increase evaluation and followup analyses.

Newsletters and Other Periodicals: Several publications are now being issued regularly or fairly frequently to provide up-to-date information about continuing education programs for women. The first to appear was the newsletter of AEA's Continuing Education for Women Section. It has been supplemented in the organization's monthly journal Adult Leadership by the Section's column titled New Directions for Women. Also fairly new is the newsletter of the Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession of Adult Education.

Timely information about continuing education programs can be found too in other publications reporting on the women's movement, such as Women Today, The Spokeswoman, and On Campus With Women. In addition, reports about women's programs are contained in Adult and Continuing Education Today and in Continuing Education for Adults Newsletter.

New York Times Directory: A comprehensive compilation of educational opportunities available to both men and women is contained in The New York Times Guide to Continuing Education in America,[13] prepared by the College Entrance Examination Board. Covering approximately 2,100 classroom institutions and 180 correspondence schools, the mass of institutional information is separated by State and specifies general categories of courses offered and major types of supplementary services. Also included in the data reported for some institutions are tuition costs, admission requirements, and financial aid opportunities.

FINANCING CONTINUING EDUCATION

Educational institutions and women themselves are continually inquiring about potential sources of financial assistance for continuing education programs for women. Although most program directors would prefer to be able to obtain funding through their own educational institutions, many need to seek seed money in the early stage of development before their undertaking becomes self-sufficient.

Outside funding for new courses and programs has come from two sources in particular: Title I monies of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and private foundations. With few exceptions the Federal awards have been exceedingly modest.

Even more scarce than funds for program development have been scholarships and fellowships for adult women, particularly for those who attend school on a part-time basis. A number of colleges and universities do provide some kind of financial aid to encourage mature women to resume their education. Such aid may take the form of reduced tuition and fees, small grants, and partial or full scholarships and fellowships. These awards sometimes specify that women enrolled for either full- or part-time study can qualify for the assistance. In addition, scholarships of both types are made available to mature women by some campus and county chapters of the Association for Women's Active Return to Education (AWARE).

A study made under the auspices of the National Advisory Council on Extension and Continuing Education analyzed the scope of financial support available both for continuing education programs and their women students. It concluded that the available financing was highly inadequate.[14] Suggestions for extending such aid included rethinking the potential coverage and utilization of funding programs already provided by several Federal laws. It was believed to be highly reasonable for Federal officials and administrators of

several programs specified in the report to interpret their directives so as to cover women as an educationally disadvantaged group in need of Federal assistance for self-fulfillment and professional development.

Another potential source of funding in this area is the congressional proposal for women's educational equity. Intended to help eliminate sex discrimination in education, it would provide for a program of grants and contracts to finance pertinent demonstration and pilot projects. Among the eligible activities specified in the 1973 bill are "support of women's educational programs at all educational levels" and "training, educational, and employment programs for unemployed and underemployed women."

CONCLUSIONS

This brief summary of multiplying programs, shifting emphases, and ongoing problems gives some indication of the current stage of development of the continuing education for women movement in the United States. There is little doubt that much more expansion of programs must occur before the educational needs of mature women approach fulfillment. So long as large numbers of educational institutions fail to consider continuing education programs for women as potentially part of their standard educational offerings, a glaring gap will remain between demand (expressed or unexpressed) and response.

Establishment of a network of programs throughout the country would require vastly greater involvement by public school systems as well as the participation of many more colleges, universities, and private organizations. If this were to take place, the accessibility to continuing education offerings would extend beyond metropolitan areas to many more women living in small towns and rural communities. In addition, the availability of relevant courses in junior and high schools would enable the movement to reach not only middle-class women, who are now its principal beneficiaries, but also more women at lower educational and lower income levels.

Viable expansion of the movement must support efforts to establish more child care facilities for mothers while attending classes. It is evident too that new sources of funding must be found to help finance both needy women students and also institutions that require seed money while developing new programs and services.

Despite these many remaining problems, there are good reasons to view them as challenges and not barriers. The history of the movement, particularly the factors behind its formation, warrant the optimistic belief that its present strength exceeds that of a short-lived phenomenon.

The most important strength of continuing education programs for women is the origin of their creation; that is, the deeply felt needs of mature women in our society. Also strategic is that the programs have continued to be responsive to their constituency. Their great diversity and flexibility are a testament to this responsiveness. It is noteworthy too that the movement has been alert to the related concerns of women students. As a result, it has offered encouragement and cooperation for the development of such activities as women's studies programs, women's resource centers, and women's caucuses or committees on the status of women.

A possibly unexpected dividend of the movement has been its contribution to raising the consciousness of mature women. Exposure of mature women to the facts of sex discrimination and to the multiple barriers restricting women's achievements has heightened their awareness of women's status in our society and hardened their resolve to help achieve changes.

The value of these programs and courses to other groups in our society has also become evident as the movement has developed. Our expanding economy has made it essential for more adult women to participate in the work force. This, in turn, has increased the interest of employers and educators in establishing courses and services which would prepare women for entry or reentry into employment.

The influence of the continuing education for women movement on the total continuing education movement is a subject that would make interesting research study. It is known that many of the broader programs now offer various features originally developed for women, such as flexible scheduling of hours, emphasis on individual counseling, and liberal provision for transfer of credits.

Perhaps still to be appreciated more fully by educators and counselors is the value of continuing education programs to improved counseling of undergraduate women. Through exchange of information between the young and the mature, undergraduate women are helped to see the advantages of long-range life planning, the high probability of their becoming part of the work force, and the importance of their undertaking career development. For educators and administrators in institutions of higher education, increased numbers of mature women students can help also to counterbalance declines in the enrollment of college-age students.

Thus, the prognosis for continuing education programs for women can be viewed as promising. The rationale for maintaining programs for women (distinct from coed centers of continuing education) is still valid so long as there are separate and pressing requests by women, including those with little or no job skills but desirous of obtaining special assistance, counseling, and training prior to returning to mainstream activities.

Even when the counseling of young women may have become more realistic and when equal opportunities for education and employment have been achieved, women can still be expected to seek continuing education. Because of the discontinuities and flexibilities that probably will still be associated with the life patterns of women, many will continue to want new or refresher training for changing circumstances and occupations. Further development of continuing education for women is therefore a necessity for the attainment of goals desired by women individually and society at large.

FOOTNOTES

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